

KING EDWARD VII. ORDER OF NURSES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The Report of the King Edward VII. Order of Nurses in South Africa, of which His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen are Patrons, and His Excellency the Governor-General (the Earl of Clarendon) President, is always of considerable interest, and we are glad to note in the Annual Report of the Executive Committee for 1934, signed by the Countess of Clarendon as Chairman, a more hopeful note than that of the preceding year.

The Committee report an increased interest shown in the work of the Order and in rural nursing generally. This, they say, is undoubtedly largely due to the Conference on Rural Nursing convened by His Excellency the President of the Order, and held in Cape Town in May, 1934, and to the publicity given to its proceedings by the Press. This interest was kept alive by the Continuation Conference Meeting held in Pretoria last September.

During the year the Order lost, through the death of the Right Honourable Earl Buxton, one of its earliest Patrons. When Lord Buxton was Governor-General of the Union, he was actively associated with the work of the Order in his capacity as President, and before leaving South Africa he allocated to it the sum of £3,000 from the amount received from the Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem for Red Cross work in South Africa; the amount was to be, as far as possible, for the relief of those who suffered during the war, but the donation was merged in the general funds of the Order.

One of the difficulties with which the Order has had to contend is that of finding bilingual nurses. In many cases competent nurses, whose services could be secured, speak English only, while those who are conversant with Afrikaans are sometimes unwilling to go to the isolated and uncongenial places where their services are sought. It must be admitted, says the Report, that at some of our stations a nurse must be imbued with a missionary spirit to make her life tolerable, and it is not to be wondered at that she prefers work in more congenial surroundings.

The Hon. Treasurer, Brigadier-General Collyer, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., writes strongly as to the need for "the provision of everything essential for the proper performance of the nurses' duties in the remote districts, in which, he says, they now carry out their work in conditions which are unfair to themselves and a reflection on the general community.

"Government aid (of which there is some prospect) should," he says, "include arrangements for decent and comfortable housing, food and transport. The quarters of the nurses are, in places, most unsatisfactory, and in some instances they have to walk a considerable distance for their meals.

"Such transport arrangements as the Order can afford are quite inadequate, and absence of proper and regular facilities throws an amount of physical exertion on the nurses, which is quite unfair, and leads to their exhaustion and, occasionally, breakdown."

In some districts a nurse who undertakes, quite alone, rural nursing, abandons all the amenities of life, recreation, society and even comfort of living.

"In any public service such hardships are compensated for by liberal leave conditions and/or extra remuneration. There is no such consideration in the case of the women, who devotedly work under the most discouraging conditions for the Order. Their devotion to duty is remarkable in a profession of which such devotion is a common feature.

"They are engaged on a work of vital national importance, and it is idle to shirk the fact that their public spirit is being

taken advantage of. Fair treatment and decent conditions of life should be assured to them."

Miss J. E. Pritchard, the Secretary-Superintendent, writes in her Report, in the same strain. She says:—

"Pofadder is a hundred miles from Kakamas, where the nearest doctor lives, and the need for a nurse in this district has been proved by the amount of work done there since Sister Langmore's arrival on the 1st of September. During the four months she has been constantly at work, often for an 18-hour day. The intense heat and the lack of transport have made the work very exhausting, in addition to the added anxiety and responsibility of having to deal with serious emergencies without a medical man.

"Sister Joyce has had a difficult time at Springbok, as she has been expected at times to run the local hospital as well as nurse her district cases. For several weeks the hospital has not had its own nurse, consequently Sister Joyce has often had to visit her own cases at the end of a heavy day in the hospital. Unfortunately she is not a grumbler, and worked without complaining; consequently, her health has been seriously affected. She hoped that her annual leave, which she is taking in January, would be sufficient, but on medical advice she has been granted a further three months as sick leave. We are indebted to Sister Joyce for all that she has done, and I know the people of Springbok appreciated her work, without perhaps realising how strenuous it was."

As an illustration of the way in which the nurses are appreciated, Miss Pritchard quotes from a letter from Mrs. Dan Biggs, of Louisvale, who recently wrote:—

"We realise, as few do, the inestimable value of a nurse in a community such as this, where families are being reclaimed from poor white-dom, and becoming self-respecting and self-supporting citizens. At this stage it is a wonderful service to introduce sound ideas on nursing hygiene. Please convey to your Committee that we do most tremendously appreciate the work they are doing for us."

Miss Pritchard concludes her report by recording her deep appreciation of the work of the nurses of the Order, and of the cheerful spirit with which they meet and overcome all their many difficulties.

THE DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S ON SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, President of the Guild of Health, was in the chair recently at a public meeting of the guild at Church House, Westminster. He said the whole question of spiritual healing was being forced on public notice, and the members of that guild believed that the angle of vision which it had adopted could reveal something which was of real value to the general welfare on that very great question.

The Dean of St. Paul's said the common-sense view was that mind interacted with body, and that one affected the other. They were interested, not in mental, but in spiritual healing. What had not always been recognised was that there was a higher level than mind. Man was body, mind, and spirit. A healthy mind was one which viewed not confusedly, but as a whole—clearly and harmoniously. The spirit of man was healthy when it was not distracted, but wholly devoted to the supreme good. A healthy human being was one who was integrated—not his body only, or his mind or spirit only, but who was integrated body, mind, and spirit. He believed the purpose of their guild was to promote the study of that integration, and also to promote the true happiness of humanity through prayer and through contact with the creative spirit.

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